



Why does the BPW flush the Fire Hydrants? The BPW flushes the hydrants for public safety -- firefighting and safe drinking water.

ISSUE: Fire Hydrant Flushing. The BPW flushes the fire hydrants in its service area semi-annually.

BACKGROUND: Flushing of fire hydrants is one of the most important maintenance practices that can be performed on a water distribution system. In the flushing process, the BPW looks for and tests for the following:

- Visible and audible leaks
- Proper operation of valves
- Flushing out corrosion & rust
- *Pitot* Testing: Provides measurement of flow and gallons per minute and pressure from hydrants. Test is done as needed.
- Color of the water

If ignored, corrosion and rust can cause problems such as: severe rusty water, reduced water pressure, and lower chlorine levels. Replacing water that has been standing in the system with fresh water is especially important in dead end main areas and low flow areas in the system. Flow testing of fire hydrants is done in cooperation with Lewes Fire Department to identify the amount of water a certain fire hydrant can deliver during an emergency situation. This service is done on a continuing basis so that problems can be identified and then resolved.

STATUS: In 2009, the BPW adopted a policy of hydrant flushing on an annual basis to conserve water and cost to customers. In 2011, the BPW determined that this approach did not maintain the water quality expected by our customers so the BPW has returned to a semi-annual hydrant flush program.

BUDGET DATA

	Cost of semi-annual flushing of entire system - FY11	Cost Per Hydrant
Fire Hydrant Flushing	\$20,000.00	\$65.00

QUESTIONS: If you have further questions about the basis for fire hydrant flushing, please contact the BPW General Manager, Darrin Gordon: 302-645-6228 or go to: www.ci.lewes.de.us/BPW-Utilities

August 24, 2011